

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services
Division of
Child Day Care Licensing

No. 5
Program: Infants, Toddlers,
and Preschoolers

KNOWING AND LEARNING WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

By Marcia Rysztak, Instructor
Lansing Community College

In infancy and toddlerhood children are laying a foundation for all future learning. To help them begin their growth in a positive manner and to match our interactions and programs to each child's interests, it is necessary to know about the growth and development of the young child.

Infancy is a time of tremendous growth within the child. From the day of birth, each infant expresses his or her own personality and is already quite a competent human being. Much attention has been given of late to the importance of stimulation for the baby. The very best stimulation comes from human contact because it gives the baby so much sensory input as well as personal interactions. Yet all infants and toddlers will benefit from other sensory experiences, too. Young children learn about the world from direct contacts with real objects using all of their senses: eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands. Following are some suggested activities for children from age 0 to 12 months:

Activities for Infants

For the stationary younger infant:

- Hang a patterned piece of fabric next to the crib.
- Glue a face on a margarine lid and hang from a ribbon near the infant seat.
- Hang musical mobiles at eye level.
- Place infant on a textured or patterned blanket.
- Talk, talk, talk.

For the older baby who can sit and play:

- Make large cardboard books with magazine pictures and contact paper.
- Provide large metal or plastic measuring cups that fit inside each other, Easter baskets and playing cards, papertowel tubes, and clothespins, metal coffee pot with lid and grounds basket.
- Provide things to crawl on and around: pillows, boxes, laundry baskets.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Day care providers have asked for an issue of Better Homes and Centers on programming. In fact, the editorial staff has decided to devote two issues to this subject because of your interest. The need for good programs for young children is confirmed by current research which is making all of us more aware of the capabilities of even newborn infants.

A stimulating environment, consisting of skilled adult participation, age appropriate materials, and association with other children, is now viewed as essential for developing cognitive capacities. Early child care experiences which incorporate the above ingredients can do much in helping children progress in all areas of their social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual development.

In addition to environment, children's feelings about themselves are another important aspect of development. First, as all of you know, working with young children demands enthusiasm, preparation and a lot of energy. (That goes for parents too.) Quality child care in both day care homes and day care centers go far beyond just "babysitting" or "warehousing" children. The articles in this issue contain many ideas for making learning fun. When learning is fun, children develop good feelings about themselves.

Young children are eager to learn. Be open to ways you can continue to improve your day care children's environment whether it be in a classroom or in a home. But by all means, whatever you do, help each child in your care feel good about him or herself. The payoff will be enormous for years to come as that child grows into adulthood.

Ted deWolf, Director
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

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Once the child reaches the first birthday and begins walking, he truly becomes a toddler. During infancy the child learned to trust the world to take care of his needs. The toddler's emotional task is to develop a sense of autonomy and independence. We can encourage this by giving the child choices which helps to promote decision making. Consistency in expectations and a few clearly stated limits that focus on safety will also help the toddler to know what are his parameters and may prevent some tantrums from occurring. Another way to prevent conflicts is to substitute an acceptable behavior for an unacceptable one. For example, pounding on the table can be substituted with pounding on drums (wooden spoons and coffee cans). Toddlers are easily distracted and what they see is what they want. Because of this, it is sometimes better to put out a smaller selection of toys and change them as the children lose interest, or put the toys in different sections of the room. Dividing areas with dividers or furniture helps to increase attention span. For example, in a day care home, a couch can be moved to be perpendicular with the wall, thus creating two smaller play areas instead of one open room.

Socially, the toddler is enjoying other children more and more but he is not yet able to share. He feels that what he has belongs solely to him. If another child has a toy that he wants, he feels he has the right to just grab it. When the toddler gets into a conflict with another child, it is helpful to let him know what behaviors are unacceptable and what she can do instead. "Hitting hurts. Tell John, 'That's my toy'." Having multiples of toys helps, as does consistency in your response, and patience!

Toddlers continue to learn through their senses. One of the greatest passions at this age is dumping. Provide the toddler with a wide variety of things to put in and out of a wide variety of containers. Gathering is another game toddlers like to play. They enjoy putting things into wagons, or purses or even paper bags. (Remember plastic bags are dangerous.) Empty food boxes and paper bags are a fun combination as are small paper bags and rocks.

Have your own kids suffered from day care burnout? Are they tired of day care children being in your home all the time? Are they jealous of the day care children and the time you spend with them? Send your suggestions for dealing with these and similar problems to Sandy Settergren at 555 Towner, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. We will print as many as possible.

From about 18 months on, the toddler can be exposed to the same type of experiences that are provided for preschoolers, but on a less structured basis. Provide crayons, paint and playdough, but keep it open-ended and well supervised. Provide lots of large motor exercise (as the toddler is very active) through items like wheel toys, push and pull toys, climbing slides, balance boards, and balls. Commercial toys become more interesting. Simple puzzles, bristle blocks, Duplo Building Blocks, stacking toys and large peg boards are great favorites. Toddlers are a challenge because they need to be challenged.

Even infants and toddlers become bored if they have the same things to play with day after day, hour after hour. The fussy baby or toddler who is into everything may be telling you that she wants some new stimulation. Try rotating activities and toys; bring out different things in the morning than in the afternoon. Alternate toys—put some away and bring them out next week. Getting to know your infants and toddlers and what they enjoy will help to make learning fun for both you and the children.



MAEYC - FAMILY DAY CARE

Spring Conference is coming!

March 8 & 9th, 1985

Reserve these dates - Plan to attend Kellogg Center, MSU, East Lansing.

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PROGRAMMING FOR THE THREE YEAR OLD

THE CHILD IN TRANSITION

*By Carole M. Grates, Consultant
Division of Child Day Care Licensing*

Often we forget that the three year old, who has only recently left the toddler stage, has not completed his journey into the preschool stage. This transitional age requires unique methods that are not necessarily successful with either toddlers or preschoolers.

A responsive environment is the foundation of the total program for all children. Divide the preschool into various interest areas large enough to permit active exploration and yet small enough to make the young child comfortable. Consider carefully the placement of the areas to assure that the activities of one do not infringe upon those of another. Equip each area in such a way that the child has a variety of choices stored on low shelves for visibility and accessibility.

Since the environment is open and offers many choices of independent activities, the program format needs to allow ample time to interact with the environment within a given program time frame. It would be feasible to plot at least 3/4 or more of the time as active, exploratory play time. Providing a large segment of time for exploration play takes into account that the three year old is still engaging in parallel play and has not yet moved into the behavior frame which allows him to see himself as a member of a group.

With rare exceptions, the only successful group activities for three year olds are those in which the child is a physically active participant. For example, using the flannel board to tell a familiar folk story in which the children are verbally responding (i.e., Goldilocks and the Three Bears) will be more successful than asking the children to listen quietly to an unfamiliar story. The key in all group activities is to keep them brief, preferably 5 to 10 minutes, to accommodate the three year old's short attention span.

One approach to group structuring within the three year old program could be to schedule no formal group activities. The young child is not yet engaging in cooperative play (which group work requires) and in his egocentric vision does not view himself as a member of a class. However, informal groups can happen spontaneously. A warm adult sitting on the floor with a book will soon have a group who has chosen to listen to a story. An adult and an autoharp in a corner of the room

are an invitation to many children to sing. The child, through independent choice, will begin to see that he can be a member of a group without having his individuality threatened.

The open program also takes into account the three year old's striving for independence. The well-planned environment allows him to choose an activity without the imposition of adult opinions. It allows him to pursue the activity for as little or as much time as he feels necessary and the opportunity to choose activities for challenge or for refinement according to his own perceived needs.

Adults play a critical role in extending exploratory play. As facilitators, they interact on the child's level if intervention in the play is essential. They thoughtfully rotate available materials and encourage exploration of new or previously neglected materials.

As observers adults need to be aware of the child who requires assistance with an activity as well as noting the developmental needs of each child. They can then provide appropriate materials that are responsive to the changes.

Three year olds are just beginning the journey as preschoolers. An open environment, enhanced by an extended exploratory play with the assistance of warm, observant adults, will allow the three year old to gradually progress from parallel play to cooperative play; from dependence to independence; from individual to member and most importantly, from three-year-old to four-year-old.



EVALUATING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS THROUGH OBSERVATION AND TESTING

By Betty Garlick, Specialist Retired
Family and Child Ecology, MSU

A wide variety of scales, tests and inventories is available for use in evaluating children. The appropriateness of these instruments depends upon what you are assessing and how each instrument will add to the information you already have about the children. A limitation of these instruments is that they focus on the child at one given time and may be inadequate for assessing his progress in the program.

Some of these instruments can be used by the classroom teacher, but may require special training and experience to administer. This often makes it difficult for the child to relate to someone who is unfamiliar to him. Tests are used for times when there is doubt or confusion about a child and unless you need them for special purposes, you will probably gain just as much useful information about children from careful observation.

Maria Montessori was one of the contributors to early childhood education as we know it today. She presented the teacher as an observer, always ready to guide and direct the child and keep alive the child's enthusiasm for learning without interfering with his efforts to teach himself. Teachers and caregivers need to perfect their observation skills to enable themselves to better understand and assess children's development and to plan programs which promote growth.

Why and When of Observation

Observation is more than casual looking at children — it means gathering information and general impressions about children and program with an open mind. Through observing carefully and objectively caregivers gain invaluable information and understanding. Observation is the basis of much of what we do in working with children. Probably as well as observing children, we need to observe what is going on in the classroom and also be aware of our personal feelings and reactions to what we observe.



Observation can:

- Provide caregivers/teachers with increased sensitivity to how children behave, think and learn.
- Make us aware of the unique qualities of each child.
- Permit us to compare what we know about growth and development of the children in our care.
- Help us to understand individual behavior problems and the part adults and materials may play in these problems.
- Help caregivers to plan activities based on children's special interests, skills, strengths.
- Be used to gather information for reporting progress to parents.

A Caution in Observation

Observations are tentative, providing clues to how children are doing. Because development never stands still, observation must be continuous.

Methods of Observation

Anecdotal — jot down a description of child in an activity, date it and keep as a record of activity and growth.

Time Sampling — this a good method when a child seems to be having a problem. By recording behavior at specified intervals for a period of time, caregivers are able to tell if this behavior occurs often enough to constitute a problem.

Narrative Diary Descriptions — a method I found particularly helpful. Place children's names on separate notebook pages. At the end of each day jot down representative happenings about each child. This helps the caregiver to focus on a child's continuous growth and possible special needs. Each entry is dated and new pages can be added. Anecdotal observations and time sampling records can be included.

Checklists — Lists of behavior or developmental activities can be devised and a sample check made to see if a child can perform the activity.

Regardless of the method, the mechanics should not be so elaborate as to be burdensome. Good teachers and caregivers have always used observation effectively. The more carefully you observe, the more sure you are about what to do and the more effectively you do it. Happy observing!

A GAME PLAN

By Nora Wadlin
Center Licensing Consultant, Delta County

The young of all animals are playful. Watching children play helps adults plan appropriate games for fun, learning and socialization. Many games involve imitation of animals.

*Chase your tail, kitty; chase your tail, kitty
Now you think you have it,
Chase your tail, kitty; chase your tail, kitty
Now it got away*

OR

*When you scratch, scratch, scratch your HEAD
The monkeys scratch, scratch, scratch their HEADS
Monkeys see, monkeys do
The monkeys do the same as you
(Also, "BACK", "CHEST", "ELBOW", "KNEE")*

Chanting such rhymes may develop into a tune. Older children often enjoy joining in younger children's games. We all like to turn back the pages of time occasionally.

Dare to create your own songs. These songs can mirror a child's actions or behavior.

*See-saw, see-saw
Erik goes up, Gregg comes down
Swinging, swinging
Michele goes up, Steven comes down
Becky goes up, Nathan comes down*

OR

*Smiling, smiling
Pat smiles at Carole
Barb smiles at Judy
We all smile at each other.*

If you learn to make up songs, you're ready for any age group. Older children enjoy using their imagination, too. Encourage it!

There are good records available, but learn to use your voice. Children accept any adult's voice. Singing makes music available **anywhere**. If you play the piano, guitar or any musical instrument, accompany yourself and the children. Everyone will feel like singing.

Young children never seem to tire of a game such as "Duck, Duck, Goose." Keeping the group small (10 children or less), makes it easier to repeat a game by popular demand.



Many games can be adapted for different ages. "Musical Chairs" is highly competitive and requires safe movement of chairs. This may fascinate school-age children. Three and four-year-olds are not emotionally ready for the game. Instead, use a piece of yarn or masking tape to make a circle large enough to seat all the children. Play music while children march around the room and through the circle. Whoever is "caught" in the circle, sits down. Soon everyone is sitting together inside the circle. Nobody loses! Children have experienced socialization. Cognitive awareness about space has occurred also.

Games should be offered to children every day. What a nice way for parents and other teachers to have fun with children of all ages!

IT'S YOUR MOVE!

By Joan Workman
Family Day Care Licensing Consultant
Muskegon County

Winter weather is here and you are caring for little children who have a lot of extra energy. Most likely you are not getting outside as often with the children. What can you do to channel that energy? Why not a Fitness Class or a time to do some "tricks"?

To have a Fitness Class, you need to know a little about what fitness is. Physical fitness for children is made of two components: Organic performances and motor performances. Organic performances consist of strength flexibility, muscular endurance and cardiovascular (heart and lung) endurance. Motor performances consist of balance, agility, speed, coordination, reaction time. The two areas are intertwined. For instance, to have balance, a child must have strength.

You might like to try a few of the following with your children:

1. **Catching Flies** — Place your chin on or close to your chest. Open your mouth and look up at the ceiling. Hold, then close the mouth. Relax and repeat. This exercise stretches the neck.
2. **Foot Throw** — Lie on the ground. Pick up a ball and throw it with your feet. The child should aim first for distance, then for accuracy. This improves stomach strength and aids in developing fine motor control of the muscles in the legs and feet.
3. **Side Stretch** — Stand with feet shoulderwidth apart, legs straight. Place one hand on hip, and extend other hand up and over head. Bend to the side on which hand is placed. Move slowly. Do not bounce. Hold six to ten seconds. Repeat on the other side.
4. **Hop Over Stick** — Move a pole slowly back and forth, just a few inches off the floor. Let the child try to jump over it. Repeat, raising the pole a little higher. This activity strengthens legs and improves coordination.
5. **Ladder Walk** — Lay a ladder flat on the floor. Have the children walk very carefully in between the rungs or place tires on the floor and have the children walk or run by placing their feet in the openings of the tires. The tires might be placed in a single row or a staggered double row.

These exercises are just a sample. There are so many things to do with children. The exercises listed are taken from a book entitled *Aerobics With Fun* by Charles and Beth Kuntzleman, publisher.

Movement Experiences by Joan Moran and Leonard Kalkian, Burgess Publishing Co., publisher, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



MISSING CHILDREN

Missing children are a tragic problem in our society. Parents and day care providers should warn children about this situation and discuss with them the methods which are used by strangers to attract children.

Some of the most common lures are:

1. Asking for directions
2. Requesting assistance with his/her vehicle
3. Displaying a fake police badge
4. Purposely hitting the victim's bicycle
5. Picture taking
6. Participating with the victim in a sporting activity
7. Sharing a toy
8. Requesting assistance to find a lost dog
9. Offering a job
10. Faking an injury and requesting help

Parents and caregivers should realistically discuss these commonly used enticements with children. Children should know the potential dangers. It is also important to be a good listener. Your child should feel comfortable in telling you about unusual situations and people.

By Brian Baingert
Family Day Care Licensing Consultant
Ingham County

"RUBBINGS"

AN AGELESS ART TECHNIQUE



Alva Dworkin, Center Licensing Consultant
Oakland County

A meaningful art experience for children of any age should include the following:

1. Elements of discovery
2. Sensory experience
3. Free choice and personal expression

If you can recall when, as a child, you took a penny, or a leaf or some flat object and put it under a sheet of paper, then rubbed your pencil or crayon over the paper many times, then you know about the art of "Rubbing." Rubbings can be a way of creating a picture, as well as a means of discovering textures, colors and shapes. The technique has been used to record and replicate historical landmarks such as tombstones, ancient stone walls and streets.

Children of all ages can enjoy the experience. Use lightweight paper, pencil or crayon. For younger children the surface to be rubbed and the paper would have to be made stationary with tape. The youngest ones can "scribble scabble" a rubbing. Older children can select a variety of objects from which to get impressions, and then arrange them with an eye to design. Or they can experiment with an assortment of common surfaces such as bricks, sidewalks, wooden planks, fabrics, screens, walls, grates and so on.

The discovery of the pure flat texture image is fascinating. A guessing game can then be played to have others try to determine the source of the surface which was rubbed. It becomes a challenge to match the image and the reality. All ages can be involved.

Implications for language development are endless. Think of the descriptive words and concepts which can be introduced: rough/smooth; fine/course; heavy/light; wide/narrow and many more.

Variations can include the use of cloth instead of paper. Wide graphite sticks and broad flat crayons are good art materials to try, and then have on hand for other endeavors. Try chalks, "payons" or pastels. Moving the paper deliberately and changing colors can enhance possibilities for creating what could be a framable picture. (Chalk smears — dipping it in water first keeps the powder down).

Enjoy experiencing art activities with children!
Do a "Rubbing".

RESOURCES

Infants and Mothers, Berry T. Brazelton, Delecorte Press, 1983, \$19.95.

Toddlers and Parents, Berry T. Brazelton, Delecorte Press, 272 pp., 1976, \$7.95 (Dell).

A Good Beginning for Babies: Guidelines for Group Care, Anne Willis and Henry Ricciuti, NAEYC, 1975, 191 pp. \$4.50.

Playful Parenting, Rose Grasselli and Priscilla Hegner, Putnam Publications, \$6.95.

Resources for Creative Teaching in Early Childhood Education, Bonnie Flemming, Darlene Hamilton, Joanne Hicks, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977, \$20.95.

A Child Goes Forth, Barbara Taylor (A curriculum guide for teachers and parents of preschool children). Brigham Young University Press, 1980, \$9.95.

Early Childhood Education: A guide for Observation and Participation, Lindbergh and Swedlow, Allyn and Bacon, 1980, Suggests checklists and charts for recordkeeping, \$25.95.

Be A Frog, A Bird, or A Tree, Rachael Carr, Harper-Row, \$5.95.

Channels to Children (a comprehensive early childhood activity guide for holidays and seasons). Send \$19.95 to Channels to Children, P.O. Box 25834, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80936.

To obtain any of the booklets below, write Jana Brasser, Treasurer Family Day Care Home Association of Kent County, 206 Fuller, S.E., Grand Rapids, 49506 (telephone 451-8912).

Activity Book(s). Volumes I, II, III, Family Day Care Association of Kent County. Each volume (15 to 18 pp. booklets on various art and craft projects for young children.) \$2.00 ppd. each.

Activity Book, Special Science Edition, Jana Brasser, Family Day Care Association of Kent County (a 14 pp. booklet of various science activities for young children). \$2.00 ppd.

Let's Have a Party, Adrianna Hitchcock, Marion Zerk and Nina Harrington, Family Day Care Association of Kent County (a 94 pp. booklet of various part and activities and games for young children). \$3.75 ppd.

PROVIDER'S CORNER

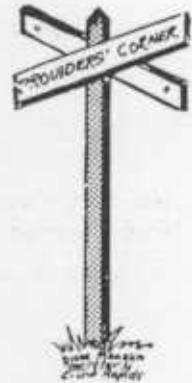
Cheryl Larkin of Clio Community Schools does a nice "no lose" variation of Musical Chairs called "Musical Carpet Squares".

- Place one carpet square per child in a circle on the floor.
- Have the children walk around the circle while the music plays and place their hand or some other body part on a square when the music stops.
- No carpet squares are removed and no one "loses". The game just repeats itself.
- Once the children have the idea, they can suggest which body part to place on the carpet square.
- When they become proficient at that, they might enjoy hopping or walking backward or crawling while the music plays.

The possible variations are endless and the children's delighted giggles will reward your creativity in making an old game suitable for young children.

Laverne Calloway, Family Day Care Provider, Washtenaw County offers this suggestion.

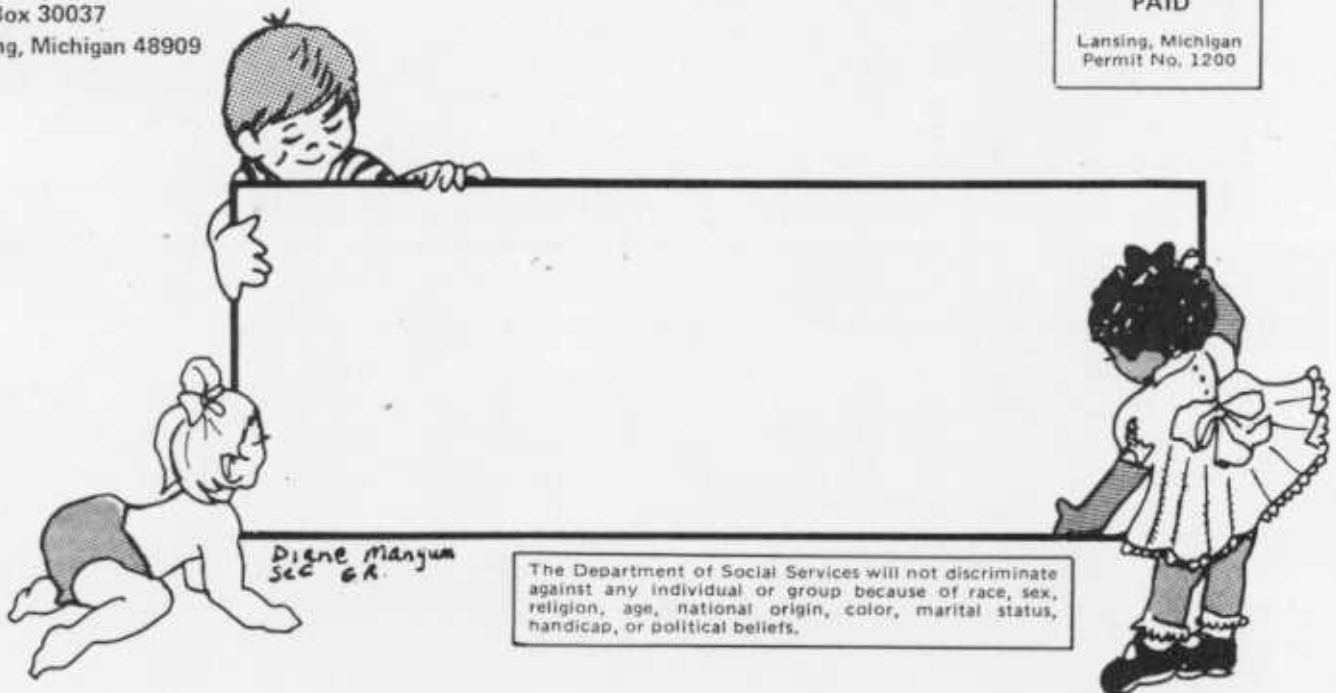
"If you have a corner large enough for children 1 - 2½, provide a pair of curtains or a full size sheet secured to the walls. They will spend hours going in and out and around, never tiring. They learn to peek at each other, fall, get up, while learning social skills, laughter and exercise. I get the greatest joy watching all the energy used. It's a great before and after nap game."



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